

independent in 1957, the event was greeted in much of the American press as a triumph of ancient Wilsonian ideals. Ghana was now the exemplar. Even the most sympathetic observers, however, soon began to discern political patterns which indicated that liberation from foreign rule might not coincide with the birth of democracy. The government of Ghana severely restricted the freedom of its opponents and increasingly appeared to forget the British model as successfully as students everywhere forget their book learning when its leaders stressed that a country could develop only if ruled by a single political party. When in later years the Ghanaians added to this a Socialist orientation and vociferous attacks on imperialism and neo-colonialism, although American attitudes toward Ghana did not reverse as sharply as did those toward Cuba during the same period, Ghana came to be viewed first as an irritating little country and then increasingly as a dangerous one.

Meanwhile, new countries were being born. The American public knew much less about Guinea in 1958, but those who followed current events in that part of the world were torn between sympathy for a country which had dared defy De Gaulle and suspicion of the Jacobin virtue exhibited by some of its leaders who proudly announced that henceforth thieves would be shot. The crucial year was 1960. Ghana became a republic and resorted to a government-controlled plebiscite to elect its first President. Among the remaining countries of French-speaking Africa for whom strange name cards were placed at international conference tables that year, the one-party regime was the usual pattern, regardless of how these countries were prepared to vote in the General Assembly of the United Nations. Democratic hopes rose with Nigeria, but fell to a new low with the Congo.

The realization that most new states were brought to life as one-party regimes has been a source of concern for American students of politics because in its most common form democratic theory rests on the competitive model of the late Joseph Schumpeter and on a long tradition of pluralist thought.¹ Many believe that "one might recognize in the opposition of the one party versus the two and multi-parties the fundamental cleavage of our time: dictatorship versus democracy."² Once it was replied that "at this stage of West African party history

¹Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (3d ed.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 269.

²Sigmund Neumann (ed.), *Modern Political Parties* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 403.

CREATING POLITICAL ORDER



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The Party-States of West Africa

Aristide R. Zolberg

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As a critical work this book often questions statements, observations, and hypotheses advanced by distinguished scholars in the field of African political studies. Lest this be misunderstood by readers not yet fully involved in the scholarly life, I should like to dispel any impression that I am attempting in this way to minimize the contributions of other Africanists, some of whom were my teachers, and most of whom are now friends and colleagues. If some of the ideas and suggestions contained in this book are stimulating and sound, it is due especially to the pioneering work of those whom I sometimes take to task and to whom I am therefore particularly grateful.

The writing of this short book has spanned four years of intermittent activity since it was initiated in mid-1961 at the suggestion of Professor Myron Weiner. During the first two of those years I profited from the stimulating presence of many colleagues in the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, and received some research assistance from that University. Since the summer of 1963 I have benefited from the financial and intellectual aid generously given by the Department of Political Science, the Committee for the Comparative Study of New Nations (itself supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York), and the Divisional Social Science Research Council at the University of Chicago. Most of 1964 was spent doing research in Africa with the assistance of a grant from the African Studies Committee of the Social Science Research Council (joint with the American Council of Learned Societies); some of the preliminary results of this research are included here. During that year I benefited from exchange with other itinerant or resident scholars in West Africa, particularly William Jones, Martin Klein, Thomas Hodgkin, and Ernst Benjamin; while spending three months at Makerere College, University of East Africa, I had further discussions with colleagues and friends, especially Colin Leys, Ali Mazrui, Geoffrey Engholm, and

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Henry Bienen; everywhere in Africa, friends and officials extended their hospitality. Some of the ideas in this book were included in a paper presented at the 1964 meetings of the American Political Science Association, and I am grateful to the panel chairman, John Lewis, for having given me the opportunity to pull these thoughts together publicly. Professors Rupert Emerson, David Greenstone, David Easton, William Foltz, and Jan Vansina applied their critical minds to the final manuscript and helped me clarify and correct many points. Throughout this period several research assistants helped with the ungrateful task of assembling piecemeal materials: they include especially Arezki Hammoun, Larry Bowman, William Kornblum, and Linda Wortman. My wife and daughter helped most of all by being themselves in spite of many discomforts.

If it appears that this mountain of aid, encouragement, and stimulation has given birth to a very small mouse, it is solely because of my own deficiencies as an obstetrician.

A. R. Z.

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INTRODUCTION

IT WAS ONLY IN THE MID-1950's, WHEN THE BEACON OF INDEPENDENCE was lit at the end of the Gold Coast's constitutional path, that observers of African politics, who had been wondering whether what was happening on the continent could properly be labeled "nationalism" and whether dependent territories were ready for self-government, began to speculate about the character of the nascent regimes. Some expressed concern over the appearance of a host of powerless and possibly racially embittered new nations on the world scene and raised as a danger flag their doubtful international orientation. Most political scientists who were in the field sufficiently early to share in the enthusiasm of the new men at the helm of the liberating movements, however, were caught up in the drama of man's search for polity which was being re-enacted in a new and strange environment. The study of African politics provided a great and exciting intellectual adventure comparable to the quests which earlier had driven explorers to overcome apparently insurmountable obstacles on the same continent. These intrepid men no longer sought to trace the sources of the Nile or the course of the Niger. The new challenge was to discover, with the help of imaginative theories of society, a system of rivulets which might merge into a new stream of democracy.

While to the general public at this time African politics suggested little more than the occasional headlines about Mau-Mau in Kenya, serious students had great expectations for West Africa, where as early as 1951, the dignified Governor of the Gold Coast had brought a gallant American-educated nationalist leader out of prison and asked him to become Leader of Government Business. For some, the photographs of a miniature tropical Westminster presided over by a be-wigged speaker simply provided an occasion for Waugh-like irony; for others such images were but the surface expression of a unique experiment in African self-government. When the Gold Coast became